

Coronavirus Updates and Resources

The recent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak has been classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization and is a serious health risk to the American public. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid exposure to the virus.

California Governor Gavin Newsom has issued a statewide mandatory shelter in place order. This order requires all California residents to stay home except for essential needs. [You can review the order here.](#) More health information is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and California Department of Public Health websites below:

- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- CDPH: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/>

You can access local health information at:

- Colusa: <http://countyofcolusa.org/26/Health-Human-Services>
- Glenn: <https://www.countyofglenn.net/dept/health-human-services/public-health/covid-19>
- Lake: <http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Coronavirus.htm>
- Sacramento: <https://www.saccounty.net/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>
- Solano: <https://www.solanocounty.com/depts/ph/ncov.asp>
- Sutter: <https://www.suttercounty.org/doc/government/depts/cao/em/coronavirus>
- Yolo: <https://www.yolocounty.org/health-human-services/adults/communicable-disease-investigation-and-control/novel-coronavirus-2019/coronavirus-guidance>
- Yuba: <https://www.yuba.org/coronavirus/>

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I keep my friends, family and community safe?

If you are elderly, immunocompromised, or have an underlying heart or respiratory condition, stay home and away from other people. If you are sick or experiencing symptoms, stay home and contact your doctor remotely by phone or email. If anyone in your household tests positive for

coronavirus, keep everyone home. Even if you are young or otherwise healthy, avoid social gatherings. Though you may not experience symptoms, you may still be infected and your activities can spread the virus to other, more vulnerable people.

What is Congress doing to help?

On March 4th, Congress voted for an \$8.3 billion bill to stabilize our public health system and provide the resources our community needs to manage this public health crisis. On March 14th, we built upon that work by passing the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#). This bill provides direct support to working families and individuals whose lives have been upended by this disease. I was happy to vote for the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#), which became law on March 27th. This legislation added \$2.2 trillion dollars in assistance to individuals, hospitals, local governments, and employers of all sizes to ensure everyone is cared for during these trying times. [Click here to read a full summary of the CARES Act.](#)

Am I eligible for paid leave, unemployment insurance benefits, or other assistance to help offset a loss of income? How do direct cash payments to individuals work?

The CARES Act provides [direct cash payments](#) to every working family in America and increases and expands [unemployment insurance benefits](#). You can review your eligibility for COVID-19-related paid leave and unemployment benefits on the [California Employment Development Department website](#).

What assistance is available to small businesses?

At Governor Newsom's request, the Small Business Administration has issued a disaster declaration for California. This declaration makes emergency Economic Injury Disaster Loans available to small business owners and non-profits. [You can apply here](#). In addition, the CARES Act includes a rescue plan for our small businesses. [Click to learn more about the bill's support for small businesses.](#)

Employers who have questions about complying with the paid sick leave or the expanded family and medical leave provisions of the FFCRA: please visit the [U.S. Department of Labor website](#) for a helpful Q&A.

Do I still need to file my federal income tax by the April 15 deadline?

No, the Treasury Department has extended the deadline until July 15. All taxpayers and businesses will have this additional time to file and make payments without interest or penalties. You can find [tips for taxpayers and](#)

[tax preparation professionals](#) and [answers to your filing and payment deadline questions](#) on the Internal Revenue Service website.

Will I continue to receive Social Security or Supplemental Security Income benefits?

Yes, you will continue receiving your monthly benefits. However, all Social Security Administration field offices are currently closed to walk-in visitors and in-person appointments. Expect service delays. You can still reach your local field office by phone. [Click here to find the phone number of the field office nearest you](#). In addition, the Social Security Administration has published information about the agency's COVID-19 response on its website. [You can access that information here](#).

My loved one is stuck in a foreign country. What do I do?

The Department of State advises U.S. citizens to avoid all international travel. Many countries are experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks and implementing travel restrictions and mandatory quarantines, closing borders, and prohibiting non-citizens from entry with little advance notice.

In countries where commercial departure options remain, U.S. citizens should arrange for immediate return to the United States, unless they are prepared to remain abroad for an indefinite period. The State Department cannot guarantee assistance and urges all Americans to have a plan that does not rely on the U.S. Government for help. Visit the appropriate [U.S. Embassy webpage](#) for information on conditions in each country or jurisdiction. Visit [the Department of Homeland Security's website](#) for the latest on travel restrictions to the United States.

All U.S. citizens and Legal Permanent Residents currently abroad should also register for the Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive the most up-to-date notifications and provide the nearest Embassy with their name, passport number, date of birth, current location and contact information to receive relevant information via email.

Key Information on Telecommunications Connectivity During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Before the coronavirus pandemic hit, approximately 28 million American households did not use the internet from home. This problem is particularly acute when work, school, and civic engagement have moved almost

fully online in response to social distancing measures recommended and mandated at the state and local level.

Social distancing has resulted in greater internet usage for telework, distance learning, media consumption, and social engagement. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), fixed broadband providers have seen network usage rise 20-35 percent in the past several weeks, while usage on cellular networks has increased 10-20 percent. The increased demand is primarily occurring in suburban, exurban, and residential areas, and during daytime hours. Despite these increases, no significant problems have been reported.

Congress and the FCC have urged communications companies to provide flexibility for consumers during the COVID-19 public health emergency and many communications companies, large and small, have responded. Information about the efforts of the large, national communications providers are provided below. Smaller, regional communications providers are also offering discounts and increased help.

KEEP AMERICANS CONNECTED PLEDGE

Numerous internet service providers have signed the FCC's "Keep Americans Connected Pledge," committing, for a period of sixty days starting on March 13, to:

- (1) not terminate service to any residential or small business customers due to their inability to pay bills due to coronavirus disruptions;
- (2) waive late fees that residential and small business customers incur because of hardships due to coronavirus; and
- (3) open their WiFi hotspots to any American who needs them.

All of the major communications service providers have signed on to this pledge, though, notably, some of the companies require customers to proactively reach out to ask for a waiver of late fees. More information on which providers are participating can be found here:

<https://www.fcc.gov/keep-americans-connected>

DATA CAPS AND DATA OR VOICE OVERAGE

Home Broadband Service: Many communications providers have lifted data caps that normally would result in charges or slower speeds if a customer exceeds the usage allowance included with their plan. Notably, some companies, such as Charter and Verizon, regularly do not impose data caps on their home broadband plans.

Companies that have waived their normal home broadband data caps include:

- AT&T home internet service
- CenturyLink home internet service
- Comcast home internet service
- Cox home internet service (has suspended data usage overage charges and implemented credits for certain data usage plan participants through May 15)

Wireless Service: Some companies have agreed to waive charges for exceeding voice and data caps for customers facing financial hardships due to the coronavirus. To receive such a waiver, many providers are requiring customers to call to make the request.

National Wireless Providers:

- AT&T will waive data, voice and text overages incurred by residential postpaid wireless customers between March 13 and May 13. Customers must contact AT&T at <https://www.att.com/help/covid-19/waive-overage-fee/>.
- U.S. Cellular is automatically waiving overage charges for prepaid and postpaid customers on plans with data allowances and it has stopped slowing customers on 2 gigabytes (GB) and 6GB data plans once they reach their data allowance.
- Verizon will waive overages incurred by consumer and small business customers between March 16 and May 13. Customers must contact Verizon by filling out a form located here: <https://www.verizonwireless.com/support/covid-19-faqs/>.

ADDITIONAL DATA ALLOWANCES

Some wireless providers are also giving customers additional allotments of data. This includes additional data when customers use their mobile device as a hotspot, which is typically limited by providers, even for customers that have unlimited data plans.

- From April 2 through May 13, AT&T is increasing by 15GB each month the mobile hotspot data available to wireless customers on unlimited plans. For prepaid customers, it is automatically adding an additional 10GB of data per month for two months. Through May 22, schools that activate new lines for data-only devices such as tablets and hotspots will receive free wireless service at no cost for 60 days. For more information, see

<https://www.business.att.com/content/dam/attbusiness/collateral/att-wireless-broadband-accessmylan-education-offer-flyer.pdf>.

- T-Mobile is giving unlimited data to customers with service plans that include an allotment of data, for 60 days beginning on March 13. Customers with mobile hotspot data included with their plans can also receive an additional 10GB of data per month for two months, upon request at myT-Mobile.com or the myT-Mobile app by adding the COVID-19 Response High Speed Smartphone Mobile HotSpot feature for each voice line. The company is also working with its Lifeline partners to provide customers up to 5GB per month of extra data, through May 13.
- U.S. Cellular is automatically providing customers on Unlimited Everyday and Even Better plans with an additional 15GB of hotspot data.
- Until April 30, Verizon is automatically adding an additional 15 gigabits of data for all wireless consumers and small businesses and an additional 15 gigabits of mobile hotspot data for customers on unlimited plans.

FREE CALLING

- T-Mobile is offering free international calls to landline, and in some cases, mobile numbers, in countries highly impacted by coronavirus.
- Through April 30, Verizon is offering free domestic calls to wireless customers on limited-minute plans, and free international calling to certain countries affected by the coronavirus.

LOW-COST INTERNET PLANS

Many home broadband providers offer internet plans at a reduced price for certain low-income customers. Each company has different terms of eligibility, which can be found on their websites, and some are also offering discounts on laptop and desktop computers and free or reduced installation and initiation costs. These plans often cap speeds at certain rates and allow a set data allowance each month.

- For households that currently lack internet access, Altice is offering its Altice Advantage plan for free for two months to new customers with a K-12 and/or college student in their home. For more information and to enroll, see www.alticeadvantageinternet.com. Altice is also offering schools and students free Business WiFi access in the New York tri-state area for students to use school-issued devices. For more information, see www.optimum.com/coronavirus.
- AT&T is offering expanded eligibility for Access to AT&T to all households with incomes at 135 percent or less than the federal poverty guidelines and to families participating in the National

- School Lunch Program and Head Start Program. New Access customers can receive free service for two months. For more information and to enroll, see <https://m.att.com/shopmobile/internet/access/index.html>. For AT&T wireless prepaid customers, the company is offering a new plan that includes 2GB of data per month and unlimited talk and text for \$15 per month. For more information, see https://about.att.com/newsroom/2020/covid_19_att_prepaid.html.
- Charter is offering new customers access to Spectrum broadband and free in-home WiFi for 60 days to any household with K-12 or college students, or an educator. Charter also continues to offer its reduced-rate internet plans to qualifying low-income households. For more information and to enroll, see www.spectrum.com/browse/content/spectrum-internet-assist.
 - Comcast is offering two free months of its Internet Essentials plan to new eligible customers, and increasing the upload and download speeds available on the plan. For more information and to enroll, see www.internetessentials.com.
 - Cox is offering two months of free service of Connect2Compete, its low-cost internet offering for certain families with school-aged children. It also increased the upload and download speeds available to Connect2Compete customers, as well as customers on Starter and StraightUp Internet plans. For more information and to enroll, see www.cox.com/residential/internet/connect2compete.html.
 - Verizon launched a new discount for FIOS home internet service, available for new customers who meet the qualifications for the Lifeline program. Verizon's current Lifeline customers will have all billing charges waived for two months. For more information, see www.verizon.com/support/consumer/account/manage-account/lifeline-discount.

FCC ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT AMERICANS STAY CONNECTED

- The FCC has waived – on a temporary basis – certain rules related to universal service fund programs, including those that support low-income consumers and schools and libraries (e.g., temporarily lifted the rules preventing providers from giving devices to rural health care providers and schools and libraries; temporarily lifted rules related to verifying low-income consumers enrolled in the Lifeline program; and revised tariffs to allow certain providers to waive certain fees for customers experiencing economic challenges).
- It has also granted the major national wireless providers temporary access to spectrum to ensure their networks could handle increased traffic, and granted temporary access to spectrum to

- certain wireless internet providers to meet increased demand for rural Americans.
- Most recently, and at the direction of Congress in the CARES Act, the FCC voted to approve a \$200 million program to immediately fund telecommunications services, devices, and broadband connectivity to health care providers to deliver telehealth programs responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND COMPANY CONTACT INFORMATION

The FCC has a duty to take complaints and work on behalf of consumers who have disputes with their service providers, including issues with service quality or billing. Complaints can be filed online at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us> or via telephone at (888) 225-5322.

Below is a list of websites and contact information for customer service agents:

Allice

www.alticeusa.com/together

Optimum (866) 218-3259 /Suddenlink 877-694-9474

AT&T

<https://about.att.com/pages/COVID-19.html>

(800) 288-2020

Centurylink

<https://news.centurylink.com/covid-19>

(866) 642-0444

Charter

<https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-expands-free-60-day-spectrum-broadband-internet-and-wifi-offer-to-include-educators-who-are-new-spectrum-subscribers>

(833) 267-6094

Comcast

<https://corporate.comcast.com/covid-19>

(800) XFINITY

Cox

<https://www.cox.com/residential/support/coronavirus-response.html?campcode=tnt-home-alert>

(800) 234-3993

T-Mobile

<https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/ongoing-updates-covid-19>

(800) T-MOBILE

U.S. Cellular

<https://www.uscellular.com/covid-19>

(888) 944-9400

Verizon

<https://www.verizon.com/about/news/our-response-coronavirus>

(800) 837-4966 / (800) 922-0204 (wireless)